

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8-10 were pending in the application.

Claims 9 and 10 were withdrawn from consideration and, by virtue of the present amendment, have been canceled.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8 were rejected.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8 have been amended.

Claims 11-41 have been added.

Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 11-41 is respectfully requested in view of the following.

The Restriction Requirement:

In a telephonic Interview on May 20, 2003, the Examiner clarified the prior restriction requirement, dated April 1, 2003, as requiring restriction to one of the following inventions under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8, drawn to a well casing;
- II. Claims 3, 7, 9, and 10, drawn to a method to install well casing;
- III. Claim 5, drawn to an apparatus to install a well casing.

In response to the clarified restriction requirement, the Applicant elected the invention of Group I: claims 1, 2, 4, 6 & 8.

As a result, the non-elected invention of Groups II & III: claims 3, 5, 7, 9 & 10; have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, and will be pursued in corresponding divisional applications.

The Rejection of Claims 1 and 4:

Claims 1 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Vercaemer et al. (US 6,085,838). The Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Vercaemer et al. discloses a method and apparatus for cementing a well that includes a fluid tight die assembly 14 that is used to radially expand and plastically deform a liner 11 into engagement with a casing 31. The inside diameter of the liner 11 is always greater than the inside diameter of the casing 31 after the completion of the expansion operation.

Claim 1, as amended, recites, among other things, the following:

"... a first tubular member; and

a second tubular member coupled to the first tubular member in an overlapping relationship;

wherein an inner diameter of the first tubular member is equal to an inner diameter of the second tubular member."

By contrast, Vercaemer et al. does not disclose or suggest that the inside diameters of the casing 31 and liner 11 are ever equal to one another. In fact, the inside diameters of the liner 11 is always greater than the inside diameter of the casing 31 after the completion of the expansion operation.

Thus, for at least the above reasons, Vercaemer et al. does not disclose or suggest the invention of claim 1. Furthermore, for at least the above reasons, claims 11-15, that depend from claim 1, are also not disclosed or suggested by Vercaemer et al.

Claim 4, as amended, recites, among other things, the following:

"... a first tubular member having a first inside diameter; and

a second tubular member having a second inside diameter equal to the first inside diameter coupled to the first tubular member in an overlapping relationship;

wherein the first and second tubular members are coupled by the process of deforming a portion of the second tubular member into contact with a portion of the first tubular member.

By contrast, Vercaemer et al. does not disclose or suggest that the inside diameters of the casing 31 and liner 11 are ever equal to one another. In fact, the inside diameters of the liner 11 is always greater than the inside diameter of the casing 31 after the completion of the expansion operation.

Thus, for at least the above reasons, Vercaemer et al. does not disclose or suggest the invention of claim 4. Furthermore, for at least the above reasons, claims 18-21, that depend from claim 4, are also not disclosed or suggested by Vercaemer et al.

The Rejection of Claims 6 and 8:

Claims 6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Cook (US 6,328,113). The Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Cook discloses isolation of subterranean zones in which a combination of solid tubulars (135) and perforated tubulars (145) are coupled to one another and a shoe (155) in order to provide zonal isolation. The solid and perforated tubulars (135,145) of Cook do not overlap with one another. Furthermore, Cook does not disclose or suggest overlapping the solid and perforated tubulars (135,145) such that the non-overlapping portions have inner diameters that are equal to one another.

Claim 6, as amended, recites, among other things, the following:

"... wherein a portion of at least one of the solid tubular members overlap with a portion of at least one of the perforated tubular members; and
wherein the inside diameters of the non-overlapping portions of the overlapping solid and perforated tubular members are equal.

By contrast, the solid tubulars (135) and perforated tubulars (145) of Cook do not overlap with one another. Furthermore, Cook does not disclose or suggest overlapping the solid and perforated tubulars (135,145) such that the non-overlapping portions have inner diameters that are equal to one another.

Thus, for at least the above reasons, Cook does not disclose or suggest the invention of claim 6. Furthermore, for at least the above reasons, claims 22-27, that depend from claim 6, are also not disclosed or suggested by Cook.

Claim 8, as amended, recites, among other things, the following:

"... wherein a portion of at least one of the primary solid tubulars overlap with a portion of at least one of the perforated tubulars; and
wherein the inside diameters of the non-overlapping portions of the overlapping primary solid and perforated tubulars are equal.

By contrast, the solid tubulars (135) and perforated tubulars (145) of Cook do not overlap with one another. Furthermore, Cook does not disclose or suggest overlapping the solid and perforated tubulars (135,145) such that the non-overlapping portions have inner diameters that are equal to one another.

Thus, for at least the above reasons, Cook does not disclose or suggest the invention of claim 8. Furthermore, for at least the above reasons, claims 28-33, that depend from claim 8, are also not disclosed or suggested by Cook.

The Rejection of Claim 2:

Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious in view of Garifov (SU 1086118 A) and Hoes et al. (US 5,026,074). The Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Garifov discloses a device for repairing a casing that includes a sleeve (11) that is radially expanded by expanding cones (3,4). The wall thicknesses of the upper and lower ends of the sleeve (11) are greater than the wall thickness of the intermediate portion of the sleeve. Thus, the thin walled section of the sleeve (11) is provided in the intermediate portion of the sleeve, and the ends of the sleeve are thick walled sections. Finally, the sleeve (11) does not include any compressible annular members coupled to the exterior surface of the sleeve.

Claim 2, as amended, recites, among other things, the following:

"wellbore casing, comprising:

a tubular member including at least one thin wall section at an end of the tubular member and a thick wall section adjacent to the thin wall section; and
a compressible annular member coupled to each thin wall section."

By contrast, the thin walled section of the sleeve (11) of Garifov is provided in the

intermediate portion of the sleeve, and the ends of the sleeve are thick walled sections. Furthermore, the sleeve (11) does not include any compressible annular members coupled to the exterior surface of the sleeve. Finally, Garifov also does not disclose or suggest a sleeve (11) having upper and/or lower ends providing thin walled sections and the intermediate portion providing a thick walled section.

Hoes et al. teaches of the use of compressible annular members (i.e., seals) to seal the interface between facing cylindrical surfaces. Hoes et al. does not disclose or suggest a tubular member having ends that provide thin walled sections and an intermediate portion that provides a thick walled section.

Thus, the combination of Garifov and Hoes et al. does not disclose or suggest the invention of claim 2. Furthermore, for at least the same reasons, claims 16 and 17, that depend from claim 2, are not obvious in view of the combination of Garifov and Hoes et al.

The Rejection of Claims 6 and 8:

Claims 6 and 8 were rejected for double patenting un 35 U.S.C. § 101 in view of claims 1 and 18, respectively, of commonly assigned U.S. 6,328,113. The Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claims 6 and 8, as amended, do not claim the same invention as recited in claims 1 and 18, respectively, of U.S. 6,328,113.

Unless stated otherwise, none of the amendment to the claims were made for reasons substantially related to the statutory requirements for patentability.

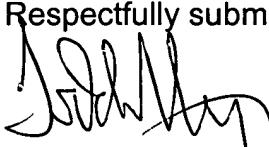
Furthermore, unless stated otherwise, the amendment to the claims were made to simply make express what had been implicit in the claims as originally worded and therefore is not a narrowing amendment that would create any type of prosecution history estoppel.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are drawn to novel subject matter, patentably distinguishable over the prior art of record. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to reconsider and allow claims presented for reconsideration herein. To the extent that the present amendment results in additional fees, the Applicant authorizes the Commissioner to charge deposit account no. 08-1394, order no. 25791.7.02.

Should the Examiner deem that any further amendment is desirable to place this application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,


Todd Mattingly
Registration No. 40,298

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HAYNES AND BOONE, L.L.P.
1000 Louisiana Street
Suite 4300
Houston, Texas 75002-5012
Telephone: 713/547-2301
Facsimile: 713/547-2300
File: 25791.7.02

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